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COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

Sub-Commission on Prevention of
Discrimination and Protection
of Minorities
Working Group on Indigenous Populations
Sixteenth session
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Item 5 of the provisional agenda

REVIEW OF DEVELOPMENTS PERTAINING TO THE PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLE: INDIGENOUS PEOPLES - EDUCATION AND LANGUAGE

Note by the secretariat

Information received from intergovernmental organizations and indigenous peoples

1. In its resolution 1982/34 of 7 May 1982, entitled "study of the problem of discrimination against indigenous population", the Economic and Social Council authorized the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities to establish annually a working group on indigenous populations to review developments pertaining to the promotion and protection of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous populations, together with information requested annually by the Secretary-General, and to give special attention to the evolution of standards concerning the rights of indigenous populations.

2. In its resolution 1997/14 of 22 August 1997, entitled "Working Group on Indigenous Populations", the Sub-Commission requested the Secretary-General to transmit the report of the Working Group to indigenous intergovernmental, and non-governmental organizations and to invite them to provide information, in particular on matters relating to indigenous peoples: "education and language". The Commission on Human Rights, in its resolution 1998/13 of 9 April 1998, urged the Working Group to continue its comprehensive review of developments and welcomed the proposal to highlight the question of indigenous education and language. The present document contains information in relation to item 5 of the provisional agenda.

UNITED NATIONS EDUCATION, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

[Original: French]
[12 May 1998]

METHODOLOGICAL NOTES ON LINGUISTIC REFORM TO PROMOTE INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES

Why should literacy be taught in indigenous languages?

1. It is now well established that early learning normally takes place through the medium of the mother tongue up to the operational stage, and one of the reasons why today's students have been falling behind or failing in many education systems is that this fact has been disregarded. The mother tongue is what enables children to "take off" intellectually once they start school. It provides a basic stability, without which children fail to develop, and it enables children to put their thoughts into words and to integrate harmoniously with the world around them. Children feel comfortable in their mother tongue, as they do in their parents' arms, and by denying them the opportunity to use this familiar linguistic support, so appropriate to their basic needs of self-expression and creativity, the school at once begins to hold them back.

2. In the light of this reality, there is no doubt whatsoever that, in the coming years, indigenous languages will become central to all the major educational reforms that are being undertaken virtually throughout the world. Such near-unanimity is no accident, nor is it due only to the current convergence in cultural policies; it is rather the product of a new educational awareness fostered by the emergence of educational methodology as a scientifically based discipline and by the strong influence on education of applied psychology, which has underlined how vital the mother tongue is to the continuity of children's psychomotor, affective and cognitive development.

How should literacy be taught in indigenous languages?

3. The following is a broad outline of a functional, flexible programme, describing the specific tasks to be undertaken in countries that are embarking upon, or wish to embark upon linguistic reform based on the use of one or more indigenous languages for literacy teaching in a formal educational context.

A. Design and prepare a blueprint for the project as a whole

4. Implementing linguistic reform requires not merely political will but also a technically and methodologically rigorous approach. It is not a random, haphazard undertaking but has conditions, premises and rules that should be set forth in a blueprint forming the scientific basis for the project. The blueprint should:

(a) Clearly formulate the underlying linguistic and socio linguistic premises, i.e. answer the following questions:

- Which indigenous language(s) will be used in the educational programmes? (This is the problem of choosing the languages of instruction.)
- What educational status will the indigenous languages have, i.e. will they be the medium for teaching and/or a subject to be taught?
- What status will the non-mother tongue previously used have (e.g. in Africa, English, French, Portuguese, etc)? Will that status be total or partial? (This is the problem of defining explicitly the educational status of the languages of instruction.)

(b) Identify which parameters are under the control of those promoting linguistic reform and which are not:

- Parameters that may affect the children's situation (the indigenous language is not always the mother tongue of all the children in the same school).
- Parameters affecting the teachers' situation (i.e. the problem of linguistic status in relation to the languages of instruction used in multilingual countries).

(c) Prepare a plan of action taking the above-mentioned points into account: the programme contents should be devised, formulated, tested, evaluated and adjusted on an ongoing basis during the various stages of the reform.

5. A project aimed at providing initial literacy in indigenous languages generally comprises the following four distinct phases: an exploratory research phase, an experimental phase, a further experimentation phase and (optionally) a generalization phase.

6. This procedure, it should be noted, is rather theoretical and its general applicability is considerably limited by the multiplicity of national situations and the specific objectives of each country. Nevertheless, even though the stages are not always explicitly described, they refer to essential activities which cannot be omitted with impunity.

B. Begin training agents of the reform (teachers, future teachers and future teacher trainers)

Training teachers and future teachers

7. Specifically, teachers must be trained to teach an indigenous language using that indigenous language. In addition to a course in applied linguistics that will enable them to write the language correctly and understand its internal structure, they will also take an education course that should focus essentially on the teaching of those subjects to be taught in the indigenous language. Teachers will be trained to give priority to

aspects of the national culture as sources of inspiration for educational activities. Educational psychology training will be based on concrete situations encountered in schools.

Training future teacher trainers

8. The linguistic, methodological and educational psychology training given to teacher trainers will cover in greater depth points they will already have studied in their own professional training as teachers. In addition, it will be necessary to:

- Provide comprehensive instruction on the sociolinguistic situations to be found in their own country or within the region;
- Give them the ability to explain to teachers and future teachers the methodology and content of textbooks written about and in indigenous languages;
- Train them in a coherent language teaching methodology, within a context of educational bilingualism (indigenous language, national language, foreign language).

9. Generally speaking, reform agents' participation in limited linguistic and educational psychology research will be planned and organized as an integral part of their professional training.

10. One of the most important lessons to be learned from the various projects geared towards the use of indigenous languages as the medium for literacy in schools is that the training of agents and teachers cannot be separated from the process of making them aware of the rationale underlying the reform. To ignore or deliberately deny this fact is to build on sand.

C. Set up structures for the design, production and dissemination of indigenous language teaching materials produced in indigenous languages

Design

11. Before designing new textbooks, any that already exist in the language, even abroad, must be listed and examined. It may be possible to revise and update some of them and bring them back into use. This is an educational question.

Production

12. A timetable for producing teaching materials in the indigenous languages should be drawn up and adhered to. Adherence to the timetable will depend on the effective recruitment of a sufficient number of staff (typing pool, graphic artists, etc.). This is a technical question.

Dissemination

13. Dissemination is a key issue. Experience shows that if teachers do not receive new textbooks and programmes in good time and in sufficient quantities, they will quickly revert to the traditional programmes they can already handle. Smooth dissemination depends on the measures taken in the areas of storage and transport. This is an administrative problem.

14. The ability to produce basic teaching materials (teachers' guides and students' textbooks in the core subjects) is a major factor influencing the effectiveness of literacy teaching in indigenous languages. It is naturally desirable for the educational institution itself to take responsibility not only for the design of such materials (subcontracting if necessary) but also for their production and dissemination. If this job is to be done well, staff, premises and equipment requirements must be taken into account.

D. Carry out a study of the legal, administrative, financial and technical framework for the effective implementation and development of the reform

15. What is specifically needed is:

(a) Support for literacy teaching in indigenous languages in clear, comprehensive statements by the authorities;

(b) An unequivocal definition of the administrative status of the researcher, teachers and pupils taking part in the reform, in relation to the existing system (updating of tests and competitive examinations, modalities of teacher recruitment, etc.);

(c) "Bridges" between the reformed system and other levels of education such as secondary and technical;

(d) The specific involvement in the linguistic reform project not only of the full range of services of the ministries responsible for national education, and of local administrations, but also of the services of other ministries and national agencies (universities, private education, departmental managers of the Ministry of the Interior, trade unions, religious groups, etc.);

(e) Identification of essential sources of financing and, if necessary, the definition of modalities for technical cooperation with other States or specialized international agencies;

(f) Effective links between linguistic and psychological research services and services providing training for teachers and for teacher trainers.

16. The need to set indigenous language literacy teaching within a well-defined legal, administrative, financial and technical framework would appear to be self-evident. Experience shows, however, that reforms are often undertaken in the field without prior definition of such an institutional framework. The resulting lack of clarity gives rise to numerous teething

troubles and constant disagreement. The lack of a legal framework, for example, is nearly always perceived by the various partners in the reform as a sign of more or less overt governmental indifference to the project. One very natural result is that neither teachers nor the general population feel motivated. It is not unreasonable, then, to view the existence of a formal frame of reference as the cornerstone of any policy aimed at raising national awareness of the reform.

Conclusion

17. As can be seen, the introduction of indigenous languages into the school curriculum is no random venture. The project is perfectly controllable to the extent that an initial programme, designed and developed with care and with due regard to the country's specific situation, is made the blueprint for the scheme.

18. The programme must be both functional and flexible. Its functionality derives from the fact that it is an instrument of direct intervention and an operational tool designed to set in motion, at the desired time and pace, the various engines of linguistic reform. Its flexibility derives from the fact that it must provide adaptable guidelines that can be updated periodically, for example at the end of each year, in order to take account of the constraints imposed by, inter alia, limited financial and human resources.

19. Put simply, the existence of an initial programme enables a linguistic reform project manager to see where to begin and how to stay on course.

20. An analysis in good faith of the underlying cause of the failure of past reforms invariably shows that realistic initial programming and blueprints either were not adhered to or were simply non-existent. The suitability of indigenous languages as media for literacy or teaching is not in doubt.

FEDERATION OF INDEPENDENT ABORIGINAL EDUCATION PROVIDERS

[Original: English]
[6 May 1998]

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND OUR RIGHT TO AN INDEPENDENT INDIGENOUS EDUCATION SYSTEM

By Jack Beetson, President, Federation of Independent Aboriginal Education Providers Ltd., Australia

1. The Federation of Independent Aboriginal Education Providers (FIAEP) is a national agency which officially formed in 1996 to promote the rights, interests and development of the independent Aboriginal community-controlled adult education sector within Australia. FIAEP aims to provide Aboriginal education, not education for Aborigines, and fundamental to our work is the principle that education is a means to self-determination. We present the following points relevant to the forthcoming WGIP deliberations on the theme of education. Our comments relate mainly to articles 3, 12, 13, 14 and 15 of the draft United Nations declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples.

2. Firstly, indigenous education reflects and maintains the cultures, values and knowledge of our peoples - peoples who have a history going back at least 50,000 years, peoples who have survived a genocide invasion of our lands. Our knowledge, our cultures and our languages belong to us, they are what makes us who we are. Indigenous education is part of passing this knowledge on to future generations. Of course we also need to learn about the dominant non-indigenous cultures, but we assert our right to learn in our own ways, at our own pace, in institutions that we own and control. Articles 12-14 of the draft declaration regarding our cultural, spiritual and linguistic identity, and article 15, regarding education, deal explicitly with this right. Articles 12 and 13 express our right to practise and revitalize our cultural traditions, our right to protect our sacred sites, and our cultural and intellectual property rights. Article 14 recognizes our right to develop and transmit to future generations our histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies and writing systems and calls on States to take action to protect these rights. To deny someone's identity is to deny them their right to learn from within their own experiences, their own culture; their right to read the world, as Freire called it, with one's own framework, rather than one imposed from outside.

3. Secondly, because of this, indigenous education and indigenous self-determination cannot be separated. Genuine indigenous education only happens when indigenous people have real power over the education process. Article 3 of the draft declaration states very simply, in the same terms exactly as those of the Charter, our right to self-determination. This means we have rights to freely determine our own development paths and, as indigenous peoples, our needs and aspirations do not always coincide with the development framework pursued by the dominant society. However, we not only have a right, but we have a responsibility to determine economic, social and cultural development strategies which strengthen our distinct identities.

4. Thirdly, indigenous education is firmly based in the real day-to-day experiences of our students and our communities. If it were not for us, for the programmes we provide, many of our students would not only not have an education, they would not have a life. Landlessness, unemployment, poverty, poor housing, appalling health standards, alcohol and drug abuse, imprisonment, violence - these are day-to-day realities for the vast majority of indigenous peoples. The "mainstream", or the non-indigenous education system, has failed us, as indigenous peoples; it has been part of the problem. Indigenous education is part of the solution.

5. Non-indigenous education systems have been deeply implicated in the systematic efforts to take from us our languages, our cultures and our children, and therefore our essential identities as indigenous peoples. In Australia, the 1989 Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody concluded that the mainstream education systems had been either unable or unwilling to accommodate many of the values, attitudes, codes and institutions of indigenous society. The Commissioner expressed his strong support for "the expressed desire of indigenous people for education and training which will support their aspirations for self-determination", and called for "a concerted and comprehensive commitment to the development of appropriate education and training programmes which are accessible, both geographically and culturally, to the greatest number of indigenous people possible". It specifically recommended that the independent Aboriginal community-controlled colleges be given full support by governments (Rec. 298).

6. Nearly a decade has passed since the Royal Commission began its inquiries. In that time, neither the rates of imprisonment nor the number of deaths has decreased. Rates of imprisonment are increasing, not decreasing, and last year, Amnesty International reported that another 21 indigenous people died in custody or during police operations. FIAEP research into the extent to which the specific recommendations of the Royal Commission have been implemented demonstrates beyond doubt that non-indigenous Australia continues to base its own systems of education and government on the denial of our communities' fundamental rights to exist as distinct peoples, governing and educating themselves.

7. Fourthly, we assert our right to be treated as a separate and independent sector of the Nation State education system. We have a distinct indigenous identity, and we have a right to a distinct indigenous education. We assert our rights as indigenous peoples to have access to the resources with which to develop our own education systems. This right is clearly expressed in article 15 of the draft declaration. It is this right that my own organization expresses in practice. This is what we mean when we say "Aboriginal education is not the same as education for Aborigines". Public policy on Aboriginal education in Australia still avoids the question of indigenous peoples' special rights in this area, focusing instead on issues such as individual disadvantage, access and equity.

8. To summarize, we want choice for our people, a choice which is central to our self-determination, an opportunity to study and to learn in our own ways, in our families, our communities and our organizations, as an alternative to the mainstream government and non-indigenous-controlled education systems.

9. We have a right to more than self-management, by which the State usually means positions of some power and influence within their own education systems and the other systems of non-indigenous Australia. When we step outside those mainstream systems, we are marginalized. There is an urgent need for Governments to recognize and accept the concept of co-existence whereby we live together peacefully whilst retaining our distinct education systems and institutions.

10. In 1994 indigenous peoples accepted the current text of the draft declaration as the final expression of the minimum international standards for the protection and promotion of our fundamental rights. Today we do not enjoy our full human rights - our rights to life, to health, to freedom, to maintain and practise our culture, to speak in our own languages, to live on our own lands. The reason is that these rights are still not recognized and understood by non-indigenous systems of governance.

NEW SOUTH WALES/AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER HIGHER EDUCATION NETWORK

[Original: English]
[14 May 1998]

Indigenous education and research

1. The present note will address the issue of research in institutions of higher education and the rights of indigenous people. Research ethics as they apply in institutions of higher education generally focus on human ethics and animal experimentation. There has been no substantial approach to developing ethics policies which have as their central consideration research with indigenous people. Global examinations of the research related to indigenous people conducted by universities and other research bodies uncovers situations where the rights of indigenous people are often infringed or ignored in the process of investigation.

2. Indigenous people are considered, in some academic domains, to be a useful and available source of information and knowledge which can be accessed by those engaged in research. The different disciplines who use the indigenous populations for such pursuits include pure science, human genetics, biology, social science, anthropology, archaeology, pre-history, engineering, medicine, environmental studies and education. Exploitation of indigenous people is occurring through the research conducted by institutions of higher education worldwide. This exploitation can be most obvious in invasive human experimentation and less overt, but also damaging, in the removal of indigenous knowledge from the control of indigenous peoples.

3. The issue of ownership of knowledge is central to research in education where indigenous adults and children are used as the subjects for an extensive range of data-gathering projects. These can range from literacy to learning styles. Indigenous people can be placed under cultural stress in the acquisition of literacy. It is essential that all the peoples of the world have the right to learn to communicate in the various languages of the globe, however, it is generally the case that indigenous people have to acquire

literacy in languages other than our own. This impacts on how our knowledge and processes for education are recognized amongst our communities and those of different, sometimes dominant cultures. Owning indigenous knowledge in the process of education research can be a difficult and delicate matter. There is, however, the matter of historical exploitation and a continuing process of colonization. This will only be resolved when ownership of knowledge is retained by indigenous people. Issues of access, control and power relations in the sharing of knowledge between indigenous and non-indigenous people must be dealt with to ensure ethical practice in research involving indigenous people.

4. Linda Tuhiwai Smith, from the University of Auckland, in her critique of western research points out that Pakeha (non-Maori) research brings to bear, on any study of Maori, a cultural orientation, a set of values, a different conceptualization of such things as time, space and subjectivity, different and competing theories of knowledge, new subsets of English language and power structures. In Australia, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are also reconstructing the research frameworks. Many indigenous people involved in this process of reconstruction look to "Aboriginal terms of reference". There is a structural difference between indigenous and non-indigenous researchers in current research practice in Australia. Darryl Kickett believes the difference is because "within the Aboriginal world the value system places emphasis on obligations and relationships within and between family and the non-human world".

5. Indigenous people are bound by who has the right to speak, investigate or research on behalf of others. Thus, as indigenous people we want to set boundaries on our engagement in research with non-indigenous researchers. This is not to say we wish to stop all research. We need to support non-indigenous researchers who are self-critical and who work with indigenous people to "ensure empowerment, and their own degrees of dis-empowerment, [by moving] through the dominant culture to effect change".

6. Amongst indigenous Australian people the spread of knowledge carries with it, at times, many restrictions and there cannot be any compromise on these. To do so may mean alienation or punishment from the aggrieved individuals or group, which would be of greater personal and community cost than would be any advantages obtained from revealing the knowledge. Thus we come to the issue of "what is knowledge?". In tertiary institutions knowledge is regarded as a product. It is extracted, packaged and delivered to particular groups for consumption. The notion that all knowledge from (indigenous) groups should be accessible and available for interpretation has only been questioned in recent times. Previously, the right to ownership of indigenous knowledge had been wrenched away and stored with individuals and institutions who claim a right on the packaging and distribution of that knowledge. This often overrides the ownership rights of those who are or were the source of that knowledge.

7. In Aboriginal societies access to knowledge is determined from the role each person has within that grouping. This is supported by the structure of education where learning is a lifelong process not dictated by institutions, but by the people and the community, and for that process to be given its proper place there must be recognition of the different knowledge bases. All

of the complexities with which Indigenous knowledge is transferred in Aboriginal societies goes beyond mere subject matter and lies within who we are as a people. It forms our identity.

8. We all need to value difference and incorporate that into the dominant cultural practice in research. The guiding principles for conducting research are:

(a) Indigenous peoples' empowerment and self-determination must be fundamental to the research;

(b) Research should not be undertaken if it conflicts with the rights, wishes or freedom of the people to be researched;

(c) Indigenous peoples have distinctive languages, customs, spirituality, perspectives and understandings, deriving from their cultures and histories. Research that has indigenous experience as its subject matter must reflect those perspectives and understandings;

(d) Research must be undertaken in a manner that respects indigenous peoples' cultures, languages, knowledge, spirituality and values;

(e) Much of indigenous peoples' knowledge is transmitted orally and should be accorded equal status with documented and other knowledge sources;

(f) What tangible and intangible items constitute the heritage of a particular indigenous people must be decided by the people themselves;

(g) All researchers must respect indigenous peoples' privacy, cultural integrity and right to control their own heritage.

9. The above principles should guide any research and are of critical concern for all those engaged in education and research with indigenous people worldwide. This, we believe, needs to be addressed at international forums on indigenous people and within all systems of higher education.

TERRALINGUA

[Original: English]
[15 May 1998]

Linguistic human rights in education

1. Terralingua is an international non-governmental organization dedicated to supporting the perpetuation and continued development of the world's linguistic diversity, and exploring the connections between linguistic, cultural and biological diversity. In Terralingua's view, there are a number of basic concepts related to indigenous languages which should be considered.

2. Indigenous peoples represent around 4 per cent of the world's population, but control or manage almost 20 per cent of the surface of the earth and speak at least 60 per cent of the world's languages. The fate of the lands, languages and cultures of indigenous peoples is decisive for the

maintenance of biodiversity and linguistic and cultural diversity. All three are correlated, maybe also causally connected through co-evolution, and all three are seriously threatened.

3. Linguistic and cultural diversity may be eroding even more rapidly than biological diversity. Languages, the carriers of culture, are today disappearing at a much faster pace than ever before, mostly as a result of linguistic genocide. The main agents of linguistic and cultural genocide today are mass media and formal schooling, along with market and other forces which shape these and other opportunities for the use of indigenous languages outside the home. Therefore, linguistic and cultural human rights in education for indigenous peoples are crucial for the survival of indigenous languages and cultures and for the future of the planet.

4. The formal schooling of indigenous children is today conducted in most cases through the medium of a dominant language, not through the children's own language. Worldwide, the bulk of those indigenous children who are in schools are judged to have "failed" to achieve, and often are pushed out of the educational system early. Later on, they are commonly overrepresented in figures for unemployment, youth criminality and other statistics that portray them as "deficient" or "deviant".

5. This "failure" results, in most cases, from the education of indigenous children being organized in ways that contradict sound scientific evidence. This evidence indicates that mother-tongue-medium education for indigenous children, with good teaching of the dominant language as a second language, is the most secure way to achieve multilingualism without loss of the mother tongue. Despite the availability of this evidence, the persisting choice of an inappropriate language medium of education is the main pedagogical reason for "illiteracy" in the world. Indigenous parents are routinely told that their children will learn the dominant language better (and thus perform better in school) by being exposed to it as early and as much as possible, even at the cost of sacrificing their own language. Moreover, most "development aid" for indigenous and minority education supports these scientifically unsound educational choices.

6. Therefore, the promotion of linguistic human rights in education must take place at two levels. People must have rights, and they must have access to the knowledge needed for making informed educational choices.

7. Terralingua recommends that indigenous children be granted basic linguistic human rights in education. Indigenous peoples have the right to exist and to reproduce themselves as such, with their own languages and cultures. This is a self-evident, fundamental collective human right, as contained in the draft declaration of the rights of indigenous peoples. For indigenous peoples, self-determination includes the right to decide about their education. At the individual level, everyone has the right to identify with, to maintain and to fully develop one's mother tongue(s) (the language(s) a person has learned first in life and/or identifies with). This is a self-evident, fundamental individual linguistic human right. Necessary individual linguistic human rights have to do with access to the mother tongue(s) and an official language, the relationship between them, and language-related access to formal primary education. Thus, a universal

declaration of linguistic human rights should guarantee, at an individual level, in relation to the mother tongue(s) that everybody can: (a) identify with their mother tongue(s) and have this identification accepted and respected by others; (b) learn the mother tongue(s) fully, orally (when physiologically possible) and in writing. In most cases, this requires for indigenous and minority children to be educated through the medium of their mother tongue(s); (c) use the mother tongue(s) in official situations (including schools).

8. Terralingua also recommends that everybody whose mother tongue is not an official language in the country where they are resident become bilingual (or multilingual, if they have more than one mother tongue) in the mother tongue(s) and (one of) the official language(s) (according to their own choice).

9. Terralingua recommends further that any change of mother tongue be voluntary, not imposed (i.e., it includes knowledge of long-term consequences and is not due to enforced language shift), and that everybody be able to profit from education, regardless of what their mother tongue(s) is/are.

10. Some recent human rights instruments can be drawn on to support linguistic human rights in education according to these principles. In addition to those specifically geared towards indigenous peoples, of particular relevance are the Hague recommendations regarding the education rights of national minorities and explanatory note (October 1996), issued by the Foundation on Inter-Ethnic Relations for the OSCE (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe) High Commissioner on National Minorities, Mr. Max van der Stoel. These recommendations, applicable to indigenous children as well, are built on scientifically sound pedagogical principles and on the provisions of international human rights law concerning minority education.

11. Indigenous peoples need to know enough about the long-term consequences of educational choices, especially choice of medium of education, in order to be able to make free, informed decisions. Indigenous peoples' ability to make free, informed educational choices is mainly hampered by ideologies that stigmatize and devalue these groups' languages, cultures, norms, traditions, institutions, level of development, observance of human rights, etc., while glorifying those of the majority/dominant group. These ideologies rationalize and legitimate the unequal relationship between the dominant and the dominated, by portraying the actions of the dominant group as always functional, as well as beneficial to the subordinated groups, who are instead portrayed as "primitive", "backward", not able to adapt to present-day technological information society. Such ideologies also diagnose the problems indigenous children face at school as due to the children's, their parents' and their groups' "deficient characteristics". Attributed deficiencies on which school failure is blamed include second-language (L2)-related deficiencies (the children do not know the dominant language well enough); cultural deficiencies (the parents' culture is not conducive to supporting school achievement); social deficiencies (the parents represent low-ranking social groups); and even first-language (L1)-related deficiencies (the children - and parents - do not know their own language well enough, and this leaves the children without a proper base for learning the dominant language).

The "remedies" adopted by most majority educational systems have been geared towards "helping" children to overcome "their deficiencies", in particular by increasing the focus on the teaching of the dominant language and dominant cultural norms, through submersion programmes or, at best, early-exit bilingual programmes, in which the mother tongue is used initially as the medium of education, until the children are supposed to "know" enough of the dominant language in order for a complete transition to it to take place. These "remedies", based on a wrong diagnosis of the problem, try to "remedy" the child, parents, and the indigenous community, instead of changing the educational system. The evidence shows that such measures do not work. Furthermore, they do not respect linguistic human rights in education.

12. Education leading to high levels of multilingualism and school achievement and which respect linguistic human rights in education would conform to the following principles: (a) expect all children, not only indigenous children, to become high-level bilinguals; (b) expect all teachers to be bi- or multilingual, so that they can be culturally appropriate models for the children and adequately support them in language learning; (c) equalize the status of the mother tongues of all children in the organization of schooling, in the role of the languages in class schedules and in higher education, in testing and evaluation, in marks given for the languages, in use in school administration, meetings and assemblies, as well as in the status and salaries of the teachers, in their working conditions and career patterns; (d) teach all children, through grade 12, both the dominant and the indigenous languages as compulsory subjects (language learning); (e) use as the main language of instruction (content learning), for at least the first eight years, the language which is least likely to be used in official domains outside school. For indigenous children, this means being taught all subjects in their own mother tongue (L1) during this phase; for dominant group children, it can mean instruction in an indigenous language; (f) use both languages (L1 and L2) as media of education in some phase of the children's education (for indigenous children, at least some subjects must be taught through L1 all the way through grade 12, while other subjects begin to be taught through L2 after the initial phase of instruction in L1 only); (g) adopt systems that promote equality in children's knowledge of the language(s) of instruction: mother-tongue-medium education (where everybody in the class knows the language); immersion programmes for majorities learning through the medium of an indigenous language, as well as indigenous children first learning L2 as a subject, and later learning content through L2 (where everybody in the class is in the process of learning the language); "two-way" programmes (where half the class are indigenous children with the same mother tongue and half are majority children, taught together by a fully bilingual teacher, initially through the medium of the indigenous language and later through both, with both languages taught as subjects to both groups).